/269 cont./
761 person who longs for death (17).

17. "I want to die," said one of these old men to Pe. Antônio Giacone, "because my teeth are tired of chewing." Pe. João Marchesi related to us the details of the only case of
159 suicide that he had heard of. A Taryana
• 682 Indian from the povoado called Cigarro, river
762 Uaupés, violently inebriated by the caxirí,
761 threw his own wife down on the ground and ill-treated her until he killed her. Afterwards he lay in the hammock and fell asleep. While he slept, the relatives and other persons buried the body. The murderer, upon awakening in the morning, called for his wife to prepare the mingau for him. They then told him how he himself had killed her the night before. The murderer, without saying anything to anyone, took his canoe and went to a nearby igarapé. Some hours later the canoe was found bubuiando (floating at the mercy of the stream) and, inside, some pieces of timbo and a cuia still dirty with timbo juice. The poor man squeezed and drank the poisonous juice of that plant and, perhaps in the convulsions of the agony, fell in the water and drowned.

756 2) The Xamã /shaman/ or Yaí.
* [192] The paje or Yaí is, therefore, the doctor and at the same time
[562] Xamã /shaman/ (that is, a magician or sorcerer). Only men can be paje.

/270/ a) His powers.

His powers are many. In the first place, to neutralize the malefice cast upon a sick person and thus cure him. He can even make individuals invulnerable to sicknesses.

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622 627 [673] tempers but to inflame and to focus angry passions upon the culprit. He does so because the Cubeo do not tolerate a judicious and cold-blooded administration of punishment. Their view is that malicious acts are committed in anger. Such acts provoke anger in return, in the course of which the culprit is suitably punished. Thus, a wrong-doer always runs away. Even if he should regard himself as innocent of the charges when he learns that charges are being discussed he deems it prudent to leave. He need not be gone very long – perhaps just a few months. When he returns the anger against him has died down and there will be no basis for action. In cases where a sibman 622 627 574 614 is being provocatively uncooperative and the senior households, together with the headman, agree that he should be made to leave, they wait for a drinking party when someone, or the headman himself, picks a quarrel with the culprit. In the heat of the quarrel the unwelcome sibman is asked to leave. The traditional drinking party [182] seems to serve as the most appropriate setting for the airing and settling of grievances and of disputes.

578 574 Fighting is the most common social disturbance and is inevitable during a drinking party. A quarrel between two men draws in others, usually close kin; each man entering the fray loudly proclaims his reason for joining, justifying by anger his right to take part. Members of the same household always have justifiable cause for anger in assisting one another. More distant kin must cite a personal motive. They can claim a past insult. A host or headman is privileged 578 574 622 to intervene to stop a fight but will do so reluctantly. In a Cubeo quarrel the detached bystander is not welcome. Women are usually strongly disturbed by fighting. They dread that someone will get hurt and when a fracas becomes bloody they loudly demand that the headman put a stop to it. If he ignores them, pretending to be drowsy with drink, they abuse him and say he is not fit to be a headman. A headman is drawn to anger and to participation in a fray if a ceremonial friend has joined a fight without asking his permission. 578 574 Ceremonial friends are as one and should share the same quarrels. Fighting at a drinking party, although actually disliked by the Cubeo, [572] is not a punishable offense, since the angry parties have had full opportunity to retaliate. When the fight is over the issue is usually closed, unless new threats and insults are uttered. Those will be remembered at the next drinking party and serve to start a new fight.

682 [614] Retaliation for murder is the responsibility only of the members of the victim's own household and lineage. Sibmates are under no obligation to avenge a murder unless, they reason publicly, the mur-

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derer, having killed one sibmate, is surely planning to kill others. However, such reasoning is more appropriate in cases of sorcery than in cases of direct assault.

Among the *Hehénewa*, I was told, a man was beating his wife when his own brother, who had no apparent cause to do so, intervened. This led to a quarrel. While they were quarreling they heard a monkey howl, always an omen of the impending death of a kinsman. In alarm, each took his gun and together they went to the river to shoot the monkey. There the wife-beater shot and killed his brother, claiming that it was an accident. However, he decided he had better leave. Later that day, when a third brother learned what had happened, he set out to find and kill his fugitive brother. The police, however, learned of the shooting and induced him to find the killer and turn him over to them. This he did. The culprit spent some months in jail and was released. By that time anger had subsided and the brothers were reconciled.

Should a man kill his wife only her kin will avenge her. There is no one to avenge or punish a father who kills his children. The only example of such crimes that I have is of a madman, but it does illustrate the point. According to the account given me, this man, crazed by hunger, killed and ate his children. He then attacked his wife, cut off one of her breasts, roasted it in the fire, and ate it. No one interfered "because it was his own wife and children." The man then cut a piece from his own thigh. The people watching said, "Let him do this. It is a good thing that he should die." They watched as he then cut his throat and died.

I also learned of another example of unavenged death. An old *Bahúkiwa* man had died and the inquest named a man of a related sib as the sorcerer responsible for the death. The sibmen threatened vengeance. Some days later the alleged sorcerer innocently came to pay his respects to the dead. He was coolly received, but no hand was raised against him. When I asked about it I was told that no one felt close enough to the old man to want to avenge him. The widow was still angry, but women are not avengers even by means of sorcery.

Theft to the Cubeo means stealing food from a garden. Thieves pull up manioc tubers in the dead of night and they steal *mihí*. Both offenses are regarded as serious and incomprehensible. The theft of *mihí* is all the more culpable because it is a sacred drug. Such theft is correctly interpreted by the Cubeo as malice and is attributed only to men. If caught in the act the thief, even if a sibmate, is severely beaten or killed. Theft of objects is simply not acknowledged.

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[775] [125] insects, not to mention the jaguar in the case of a true *yavi*. The insect spirits that arrive to fall into the pot are *tatárako* (butterfly), *utáwe* (firefly), *henohenóri* (bee), and *utcíkũ* (wasp).

[828] The common shamanistic form of killing is *dáwai*. The shaman usually kills when the victim is asleep. The death takes place in a dream and such a death is known as *dekóbaiwa* (dream death). There are other forms of professional shamanistic killing. Blowing in the house is one. If the shaman blows his breath and tobacco smoke in the same manner as in curing, but within the house, then someone [755] in the house will sicken and may die. For this reason curing takes place on the plaza. Yet having explained this, my informant added that more important was intent. A shaman could treat someone within the house and his blowing would cause no harm if he did not want it to. Boiling nail cuttings from fingers or toes in a capsicum pepper broth kills by a similar principle but with less attention to painful detail than in the previously described method of killing a sorcerer or poisoner. The shaman prepares this brew deep in the woods where he cannot be seen. He must, however, have been able to [534] obtain the cuttings from his intended victim. Finally, a shaman has a stone bull-roarer. As he whirls it the victim suffers as if struck with a machete.

• 682 278 824 The Indians claim to use a number of plant poisons which go by the *lingoa geral* term *marukimbára*, and in Tucanoan by the term for "illness," *ihé*. *Turú* is a leaf cultivated as a poison. The leaf is shredded and the fibers made up into a small packet that is dipped into a calabash of chicha until the infusion is strong. If the *turú* is used fresh it kills quickly and if allowed to dry for five days or so it produces only illness, the symptoms of which are diarrhea and excretion of blood. *Turú* is administered at a drinking party shortly after midnight. All in the house are implicated in *turú* poisoning since only the victim must drink the fatal chicha.

278 824 754 682 *Koné nonedwaíye* is a cultivated leafy plant similar to *turú* but one that produces a fatty exudation, and is intended to poison by entering the body through the urethra. At a drinking party the poisoner waits for his victim to leave the house to urinate. He then secretly places the substance on the urine. Symptoms of pain in the groin and in the genitals accompanied by a discharge of pus occur within three months and are fatal.

278 824 682 [241] *Yapíbũ kowaíye* (poison for swelling the abdomen) is another cultivated plant from which an infusion is put into chicha or porridge. Symptoms occur after a year and are fatal. For ten days the victim has fever and pain in his limbs. These symptoms subside and return.

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When the rains come the abdomen swells. After days of steady rain the swollen abdomen bursts.

Yokaíhye (leaf poison) is reputed to be so poisonous a leaf that it is never touched with the bare hand. The leaf is boiled in water and allowed to dry. Its powder is wrapped in a leafy bag and dipped in any liquid to form an infusion. Some of this liquid spilled on the victim leaves a black spot that quickly disappears. Shortly thereafter the victim dies.

Pothaíye is a berry poison. Its extract is put in chicha or at the end of a stick if it is to be poked up the victim's nose when he is asleep. It causes a slow death by wasting.

Dyóka is a forest plant that kills only children but will sicken adults. A moist packet is allowed to drip over the forehead of the sleeping victim. There is said to be a remedy for this.

There are many other *ihé* products that were not identified to me by name. Some, from the end of a stick, are inserted into the nostrils of a sleeper. People who specialize in this are night wanderers called *parébohe abúhuwa* (very powerful *abúhuwa*). They can see in the dark and are difficult to observe. They lack specific motive for their deeds and may be regarded as male witches. It is these witches who are tortured by having their flesh torn with fishhooks – one tear for each victim – when they are caught.

Another *ihé* product is *pend*, an ash that comes from a secret site

Fig. 13. Petroglyph: *Kómi* playing the ancestral trumpet, Alligator (*Pedíkwa* sib).

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754 278 824 682 at the Isana River. This is so potent that only the smallest amount will kill. The poisoner carries it under the fingernail of his index finger held in place with pitch. He may flick it into a calabash of chicha or drop it on a stool, where it will enter the anus of a victim and kill him within a month. The symptoms are headache, fever, stomach cramps, constipation, and wasting. The following tale accounts for the origin of *pená*. There was a drinking party on the Isana River and the people were dancing with *Bekûpwänwa*. Suddenly *Kómi*, a short, fat man, flew into the house on two sticks. He caught a little boy and ate him alive and then another. The people became angry and tried to beat *Kómi* to death with clubs. He said to them, "If you shed my blood you will all die quickly. If you kill me in the house you will all die quickly." *Kómi* told them to take him to a creek called *Manánkanihye*, where they were to build a fire and throw him in. They did this and *Kómi* was reduced to ashes. Every bird and insect that flew near the fire fell into it and was burned. When the fire cooled, a little boy took some bone ash, although his father had warned him not to touch it, and dropped some at the canoe landing. An old man passed over it and immediately fell sick, then another. They tried it on animals and saw it was a good "poison." It comes to the Cuduiarí from Arawakan Indians by way of the Querarí.

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278 824 Curare (*himá*) is known as a powerful poison that may be used only in war and not as a secret potion.

751 As a far from effective prophylactic against all poisons that may be administered at drinking parties and other group gatherings, the people wear as pendants packets made of a leaf called *hutcûdü*, that gives a certain amount of protection against sorcery and poisoning.

75 776 789 771 The attitude of the Cubeo that human malevolence is difficult if not impossible to guard against must be contrasted with their optimism when it comes to dealing with nonhuman spirit beings. Thus, it will be recalled how the spells and "blowing" against the spirits that threaten the newborn infant can be safely entrusted to any sib elder; he need not possess special powers, only the knowledge. The technique of "blowing" has, oddly enough, full magical efficacy in the hands of the layman but is altogether uncertain when used by a medicine man. The point, of course, is that the layman uses simple magic against a manageable nonhuman adversary, whereas the medicine man is called in to pit himself against a formidable human adversary. The human adversary is formidable in Cubeo eyes for two reasons: it acts out of directed passion and it is devious. The nonhuman spirit world, by contrast, is stirred up to a generalized anger.